

CONTENTS

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. PWLC News and Events for Educators**
- 3. Other EE Events and Resources**
- 4. EE Grants Available**
- 5. Unsubscribe**

1. Welcome!

This periodic environmental education (EE) emailing is provided by the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If you know of other educators who may be interested in receiving this mailing, we welcome you to forward this message to them or ask them to send an email to prairiewet@fws.gov with their name, school district, grade level(s), subjects, and city/state. Of course we also welcome your feedback anytime. If there is something in particular that you would like us to share, please let us know.

2. PWLC News and Events for Educators

Ask a Ranger

Do you or your students have a question about plants or animals that live in a prairie or wetland ecosystem? Send an e-mail to the environmental education team at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (prairiewet@fws.gov), and we'll post your question and the answer on our website! Click on Wild Things and then Ask a Ranger to view them.

Prairie Chicken Workshop - Our next educator workshop is scheduled for Friday evening, April 7 (4:30 pm - 6:30 pm) and early Saturday morning, April 8 (5:00 am - 9:00 am). Come learn about prairie chicken natural history and their amazing success story, then take an early morning field trip to view dancing prairie chickens on their booming grounds near Rothsay, Minnesota. This workshop is open to the public as well as educators. For information or to register, please call Teresa Jaskiewicz at 218/736 0938, extension 16. Confirmation and full details will be e-mailed upon receipt of registration.

Fire Ecology Workshop – This Project Learning Tree workshop is geared for middle and high school teachers and will take place on Friday evening April 21 and Saturday morning, April 22. What a great way to celebrate Earth Day! Special guest speakers include Chris Schuelke of the Otter Tail County Historical Museum who will provide a special presentation on fire history in Otter Tail County. Seth Grimm of the Fergus Fall Wetland Management District will also bring fire gear and explain the benefits and effects of prescribed fire. Teachers will receive many excellent resources as well as continuing education credit! Please see the listing of workshops under Upcoming Events on this web site for further information and to register.

Early Childhood Project Learning Tree Workshop – This training will take place June 6 from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm at the PWLC. Continuing education credits are available as well as terrific resources you take home. For more info, please click on Upcoming Events and view the listing of workshops on this web site.

Leopold Education Project Workshops –

Two training opportunities will take place here June 10-12. You can use Aldo Leopold's book, [A Sand County Almanac](#), with your students. See the Upcoming Events and workshop listing on this web site for more info and to register.

Suitcase for Survival – The PWLC is now offering a traveling kit on international wildlife trade and consumer awareness. The Suitcase for Survival includes animal products and raw materials

like skins and furs which have been confiscated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at ports of entry to the U.S. It also includes World Wildlife Fund's Windows on the Wild, Wildlife for Sale curriculum guide and slide show. To borrow this trunk, please call the PWLC to make a 2-week reservation, 218-736-0938. There is no charge to use the suitcase or any of our other trunks – Songbird Blues, Tallgrass Prairie, Deer Hunting, Shorebirds, and coming soon – Growing Native. (We do charge to replace missing or damaged items, however.)

Marsh Madness – Join us Saturday, March 25, 2006 from noon to 4:00 pm in celebrating our outdoor heritage during the annual Marsh Madness event. All ages are welcome to this free event which will include family discovery hikes, “Raising Riley” story readings, bluebird house construction, antique decoy display, frog jumping and origami, a ‘latest in camouflage’ display, and much more.

R3 EE Meeting – PWLC and Prairie Science Class staff and students shared educational programs and approaches with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff from seven other Midwestern stations in the National Wildlife Refuge System last week during a 2-day meeting. Crab Orchard (IL), Minnesota Valley (MN), Tamarac (MN), Neal Smith (IA), DeSoto (IA), Trempealeau (WI), and Shiawasee (MI) National Wildlife Refuges are all hoping to use the Prairie Science Class model to start a similar program. The meeting included time in the field led by small groups of Prairie Science Class students “reading the land.” The Prairie Science Class is helping shape the future of EE in the Refuge System.

3. Other EE Resources and Events

In the News -- Climate Change and the Prairie Pothole Region

An article in BioScience: “Vulnerability of Northern Prairie Wetlands to Climate Change.”

<http://www.bioone.org/bioone/?request=get-document&issn=0006-3568&volume=055&issue=10&page=0863>

Read a related article in USA Today --

http://www.usatoday.com/tech/science/2005-11-28-global-warming-ducks_x.htm

Earth Day Events and Prizes

This year's theme for Earth Day is climate change. Registering your event, even if it is a small one, such as getting your students to write letters to local officials or conducting a recycling campaign, is a great way to let people in your area and around the world know how you are spending the day. Events do not need to take place on April 22 to be considered an Earth Day Event. Make Earth Day 2006 memorable for your students! To register, please follow this link:

<http://www.earthday.net/involved/network/joinEarthdayNetwork.aspx>

Reading the Winter Landscape

Grades K-9: This “quiet season” conceals a lot of activity. After a snowfall some of that activity is revealed. Many mammals are nocturnal and hard to spot, but a fresh coat of snow on the ground creates perfect conditions for documenting their movements. Tracks can be found just about everywhere, once you start looking. Want to begin your own track investigations? For more detailed information about identifying and analyzing tracks, visit

<http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/nature/tracking.shtml>

For all the basics on tracks, visit the National Wildlife Federation's eNature site and download a free regional guide to mammal tracks in your area.

<http://www.enature.com/articles/detail.asp?storyID=654>

Nature Phenology

Nature Net's new site, **Earth Alive**, is the place where you can learn to be a top-notch naturalist-by sharing your observations of nature. The site is designed to encourage a closer observation and analysis of our natural world. By following techniques used for generations, you can track the annual comings and goings of natural phenomena and compare your observations with others in your community, in other parts of the state, and over time. Go to www.naturenet.com/EarthAlive/.

Journey North

From February 3 to through May teachers and students can participate in Journey North's free online global studies of wildlife migration and seasonal changes. Students share observations with others across North America and analyze live maps and data. Lessons, video clips, and readings selection are provided. <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/>

Participate in National EE Week 2006: April 16 - 22 Sign-up now for the second annual National Environmental Education Week! National EE Week will take place April 16-22, 2006 and will be the single largest environmental education event in the U.S. It is coordinated by NEETF in cooperation with hundreds of outstanding schools, environmental education organizations, education associations, nature centers, zoos, museums, aquariums, and state and federal agencies. National EE Week is a full week of educational preparedness for Earth Day and will involve thousands of educators and millions of students. To sign up as a partner (partnership is free) for National EE Week, go to www.eeweek.org. If you are already a partner, thank you for your support!

New EE Study – *Environmental Literacy in America*

NEETF is pleased to announce its most recent publication, *Environmental Literacy in America: What Ten Years of NEETF/Roper Research and Related Studies Say About Environmental Literacy in the U.S.* This report is a "must read" for anyone interested in helping Americans gain environmental knowledge that will lead to environmentally responsible actions. The Roper data in this report is eye opening, a true wake up call for all of us intent on developing a national sense of environmental stewardship. *Environmental Literacy in America* delves deeply into what people know and provides sobering evidence of the limited knowledge Americans have about the root causes of environmental problems and how their personal actions are connected to them. This report can be downloaded from NEETF's website at www.neetf.org/pubs/index.htm. Hard copies can be ordered for \$20 by calling (202) 833-2933 x 0.

EE-Link from NAAEE

EE-Link from NAAEE provides electronic access to environmental education programs, professional development, jobs, events, organizations and other resources. <http://eelink.net/>

4. EE Grants and Awards

The **Captain Planet Foundation** provides grants of up to \$2,500 to school and community groups to support hands-on environmental projects. The next cycle is due March 31, 2006. See www.captainplanetfdn.org for more.

Launched in partnership with PTO Today--an organization serving parent-teacher groups--the **Lowe's Toolbox for Education** grant program provides up to \$5,000 for a wide range of efforts, including public school libraries, landscaping and playgrounds. All K-12 schools in the United States (except Puerto Rico) are eligible. For more information check out www.toolboxforeducation.com. Deadline: March 15, 2006.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation invites applications from organizations seeking to start or expand the **Nature of Learning** program in their communities. Grants to be awarded on a competitive basis of up to \$5,000 to support start-up expenses associated with new programs, and grants of up to \$3,000 to provide continued support to existing Nature of Learning programs. Application Deadline: April 17, 2006. Go to www.nfwf.org/programs/tnol.cfm for more.

Recognizing Your Students

The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes seeks nominations for its 2006 awards. The **Barron Prize** honors young people ages 8 to 18 who have shown leadership and courage in public service to people and our planet. Each year, ten national winners each receive \$2,000 to support their service work or higher education. Half of each year's winners are chosen for their work to protect the environment. Nomination deadline is April 30. For more information and to nominate, visit <http://www.barronprize.org/>

Each year the Hitachi Foundation presents the **Yoshiyama Award for Exemplary Service to the Community** to ten high school seniors from around the United States. The award is accompanied by a gift of \$5,000. Nominations are due April 3, 2006. See www.hitachifoundation.org/yoshiyama/ for more information.

The American Museum of Natural History 2006 **Young Naturalist Awards** are for students in grades 7-12 to participate in a research-based essay contest to promote participation and communication in science. Two winners from each grade will be selected to receive cash scholarship awards and an expense-paid trip to New York City for the awards ceremony. Deadline: May 1, 2006. Go to www.amnh.org/nationalcenter/youngnaturalistawards/ or Contact: Christine Economos at yna@amnh.org or 212-496-3498 for more information.

The **American Birding Association** offers scholarships to help young people attend bird-related summer camps, workshops, training programs, conventions, and other activities. Applications must be received by April 30, 2006. For details go to <http://americanbirding.org/yb/schol/index.html>.

Recognizing Your Colleagues

The Ing **Unsung Heroes Awards** are given to K-12 educators pioneering new methods and techniques that improve student learning. One hundred finalists will receive an award of \$2,000. First place receives \$25,000; second place \$10,000; and third place \$5,000. Go to www.ing-usa.com/us/aboutING/communityconnections/ineducation/unsungheroes/index.htm for more information. Deadline: May 1, 2006.

The U.S. Department of Education is seeking nominations for the 2006 **American Stars of Teaching** to honor outstanding classroom teachers who are improving student achievement, using innovative strategies in the classroom, and making a difference in the lives of their students. One teacher will be recognized from each state. Deadline: April 15, 2006. Go to www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/index.html for more information.

5. Unsubscribe

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, send a message to prairiewet@fws.gov with "unsubscribe PWLC" in the subject line.

Happy Trails! From the PWLC Staff

Prairie Wetlands Learning Center
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
602 State Highway 210E
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
218-736-0938
fax 218-736-0941
www.fws.gov/midwest/pwlc

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants for the continuing benefit of the American people.